



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SECRETARY

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DEQ offers recycling tips for the holiday season

BATON ROUGE - Louisiana, like the rest of the nation, produces more garbage in December than any other month. However, all this extra garbage doesn't have to go to the curb; you can make the holidays easier and take care of the environment too. DEQ suggests a few simple tips to help:

“Pre-Cycle” your Christmas tree

You can pre-cycle by taking recycling and reuse into consideration when you buy. An artificial tree doesn't have to be discarded, and if you buy a live tree, you can replant it in your yard. If you have a cut tree, remember that tinsel, flocking and decorations must be removed before recycling. Also, be sure to remove the tree stand. Recyclable trees are usually collected during the first two weeks in January, and are used in coastal restoration projects or for grinding up into compost or mulch. Call your local sanitation department or waste hauler/recycler to find out what your community does with used Christmas trees. The state Department of Natural Resources' Christmas Tree Program helps coastal communities to place their discarded trees into the marshes for rebuilding eroding shorelines. For a list of participating parishes and to learn more, go to <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/crm/coastres/pcwrp/pcwrp.asp>

Gift-wrapping innovations and buying recycled

Save and reuse gift bags or use Christmas or Hanukah-themed fabric with Velcro fasteners instead of standard wrapping paper. Since many more products are being made with recycled content, use decorative gift boxes in lieu of wrapping paper. Buy recycled, when possible, and ask the retailer if you cannot a particular product that contains recycled material.

Foam Peanuts are recyclable

Most local mailbox or postal shipping stores will take your foam peanuts for recycling. For locations, call The Peanut Hotline at 800-828-2214. If you are a retailer who would like to participate, go to www.loosefillpackaging.com/hotline.

Recycling holiday toys and batteries

When possible, use rechargeable batteries for toys, cameras and gadgets. When those batteries no longer hold a charge, call the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation at 800-8-battery or go to their web page at www.rbrc.org for the nearest battery-recycling drop off point.

Have a safe holiday season. Remember to never burn wrapping paper or Christmas trees in the fireplace. For more recycling ideas, go to www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/87/Default.aspx. If you have recycling ideas to share, please email us at degassistance@la.gov. You can call the DEQ Recycling and Litter Section at 225-219-3265 or toll free at 800-305-6621.